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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 STOCKHOLM 000474

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/30/2019

TAGS: [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [IR](#) [IQ](#) [SW](#)

SUBJECT: MEK SET UP CAMP OUTSIDE OF EMBASSY, PROTEST CAMP
ASHRAF

Classified By: CDA Robert Silverman for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: At 1600 on July 28 a group from the National Council of Resistance of Iran, or Mujahideen-e Khalq (MEK), began an unauthorized, peaceful protest directly outside the U.S. Embassy. The groups has grown and ebbed in size, averaging 90 people. The police have authorized the protest post-facto and are now considering the groups request for a 30-day, 24 hours protest permit. The Regional Security Officer is concerned about a lack of police and the potential for the group to grow in strength. The Embassy has contacted the MFA, Swedish Security and the Stockholm Police to officially request the immediate dispersal of the group. At 1845 the police moved the group to a park 300 meters from the Embassy where they will carry out their authorized 30-day protest, under police surveillance. Embassy EAC met (septel) and is satisfied with the police reaction to date. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) At 1600 on July 28, a political affiliate of the MEK began an unauthorized protest outside the U.S. Embassy. A small group of Swedish police accompanied them. Four members of the group presented documents to the RSO outlining their grievances. The documents and statements called for the USG to halt Iraqi police action reportedly taking place against friends and family members resident at Camp Ashraf in Iraq. The representatives asserted that the Iraqi actions were illegal. They called upon the USG to use its influence to step-in and prevent violence against the Iranian nationals resident at Camp Ashraf. Once the petition was accepted, the group voluntarily moved from the location to another location approximately 150 meters from the Embassy.

¶3. (C) Four hours into the protest, the police informed the RSO the group would disperse at 2200 and return the following morning at 0930 to continue protests in an authorized location 150-200 meters from the Embassy. However, at 0045 July 29, the police advised the RSO that they had authorized the group to move to a location 30 meters in front of the Embassy. Police set up barricades to keep the protesters to a single location. The protesters have set up a tent, complete with a generator, and portable toilets.

¶4. (C) The protesters remained at this location until approximately 2300. At this time, they were granted a three day permit to demonstrate in front of the U.S. Embassy. The RSO, Marine Security Guard Detachment and other security elements in the Embassy went and remained on heightened alert until 0700 hours on July 29. At this time, the group submitted a second petition to the Swedish Police to extend the protest for thirty more days.

¶5. (C) This morning the CDA contacted MFA Director-General for Political Affairs Bjorn Lyrvall and Minister of Justice Chief of Security Policy Nils Oberg to express the Embassy's position that the group must be dispersed. The message was echoed by the RSO to the police and the Station Chief to the Swedish Security. The Embassy cited the following

as reasons for the request: a) MEK is on the U.S. Terrorism list; b) the demonstration began without a permit; c) the group's present location can be used in surveillance of Embassy staff, guests and visitors; d) the group's location interferes with traffic flow and public transportation access; e) the group's behavior, including loud-intimidating chanting, is a disturbance to Embassy visitors and staff.

¶6. (SBU) The Swedish authorities took the Embassy's concerns seriously and around 1845 the group was moved to a park 300 meters away.

Swedish Media

¶7. (U) Swedish media have not reported on the demonstration outside the Embassy. There was a small item in the July 29 edition of leading Swedish daily Svenska Dagbladet from an AFP-TT wire service report that four Iranians were killed, around 300 injured and at least 50 arrested in an Iraqi police raid on Camp Ashraf. There were further reports on Swedish radio news during the day on July 29 about the events at Camp Ashraf, including from a Swedish correspondent based in Amman, Jordan. There was no mention of the demonstration outside Embassy Stockholm.

Background

¶8. (U) The Mujahideen-e Khalq Organization (MEK or MKO) is a Marxist-Islamic terrorist organization that reportedly represses its members through cult-like practices. The MEK was formed in the 1960s in opposition to the Shah and,

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consequently, targeted both Iranian and American interests. Because of allegations it aided Saddam Hussein in suppressing Kurdish and Shi'a uprisings in Iraq following the Gulf War, the MEK is also considered a terrorist organization by the current Iraqi government.

SILVERMAN